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The Think-Fest Thief

A Reading A-Z Read-Aloud Book

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The Think-Fest Thief



Written by Dolores Kleinholz
Illustrated by Tad Butler

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WORDS USED IN THIS BOOK

High-frequency words:

1–100 a, all, and, are, as, at, be, big, but, came, each, for, from, had, have, her, I, in, is, it, look, make, my, not, now, of, on, or, other, said, she, so, that, the, their, them, there, this, those, to, up, was, we, were, what, when, who, with, you, your

101–200 help, home, into, little, new, ran, then, three, under, want

/th/ words:

The, Thorwald, Thurston, third-grader, Thelma, Thorpe, three, their, Think-Fest, Thursday, those, third, month, that, with, this, thing(s), thimbles, thermos, thread(s), them, thick, they've, thoroughly, thumb, think, then, Theo, Thatcher, thin, thermometer, other, they, thief, thought, thickly, threshold, through, themselves, thrust, there, thump, threatened, thorny, thicket

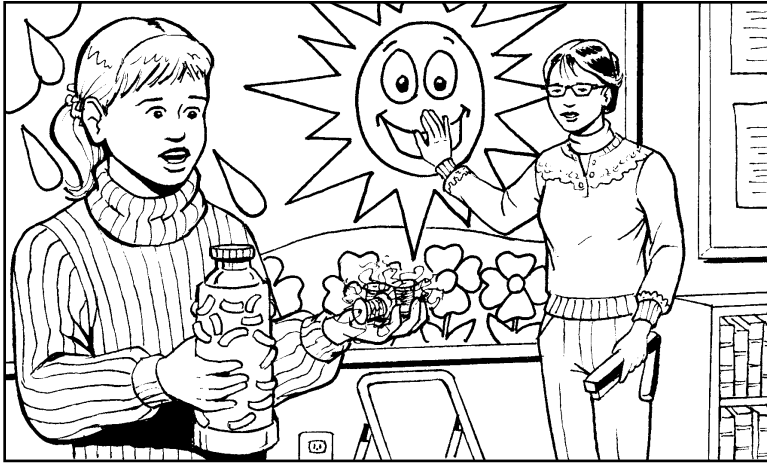
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A ReadingA–Z Read-Aloud
© 2004 Learning Page, Inc.
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Learning Page
1630 E. River Road #121
Tucson, AZ 85718

www.readinga-z.com



The mystery in Mrs. Thorwald's classroom at Thurston Elementary began when third-grader Thelma Thorpe made a curious discovery.

It was three days before the children were to present their Think-Fest Thursday projects. For those who may not know what Think-Fest Thursday is, the third Thursday of each month, Mrs. Thorwald asks the children to bring in or make projects that begin with certain sounds. This month, it was items beginning with the "th" sound.



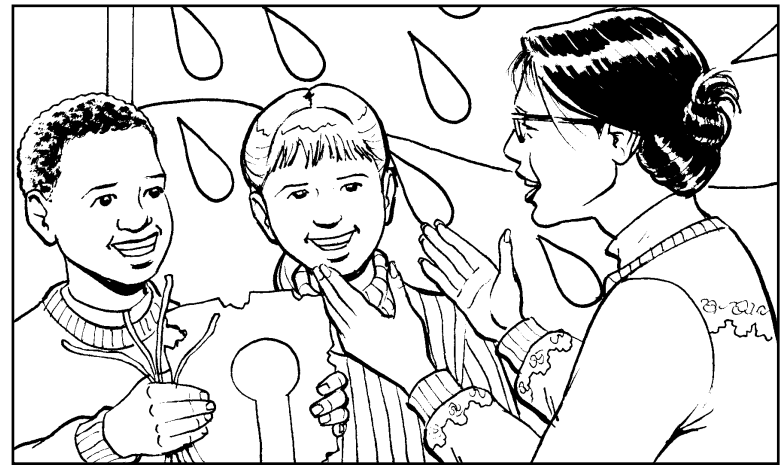
"Mrs. Thorwald, the three things I brought are ruined!" Thelma said. "The thimbles, thermos, and threads were fine this morning, but look at them now!"

Mrs. Thorwald adjusted the thick glasses on her nose and examined the three items carefully. "That's curious, Thelma, it appears they've been thoroughly chewed," she said.

Thelma ran her thumb over the thick, dried glue left on the thermos bottle. “Most of the thimbles and sparkly things I glued on are gone,” Thelma said. “I think this is a terrible thing to happen before Think-Fest Thursday!” Just then, Theo Thatcher ran into the classroom waving three thin pipe cleaners and torn brown paper. “Mrs. Thorwald, this is all that’s left of my Think-Fest Thursday thermometer! I found it beside the empty art supply cupboard.”



Thelma and Mrs. Thorwald raised their eyebrows. “The art cupboard is empty?” Mrs. Thorwald asked. “That’s very odd . . . I filled those shelves this morning with macaroni, thimbles, thread, and other supplies.” They looked at Theo holding the ragged paper that had been a three-foot long thermometer. “Theo, Thelma, this is the work of a thief,” Mrs. Thorwald said. “I think we have a mystery that we need to solve before Thursday.” They thought hard until they came up with a plan to catch the thief.





The next day, Theo and Thelma stayed after school to help Mrs. Thorwald with their plan to catch the “Think-Fest Thief”—for that’s what they decided to call the thief. Theo laid a thin trail of macaroni from the art cupboard to the third-grade classroom. Thelma sprinkled gold glitter thickly on the floor at the door’s threshold. “We’ll be able to follow their tracks when they step through the glitter,” Thelma explained.



Then Mrs. Thorwald dropped a trail of cookie crumbs from the glittery threshold to a cage under her desk. “I think we’re ready to catch the Think-Fest Thief,” Mrs. Thorwald said.

They huddled in a darkened corner of the classroom and waited. As they tried to make themselves invisible, the thief tiptoed into the room. She sniffed the macaroni, then stepped through the gold glitter, leaving tiny footprints as she snooped around the classroom. Finally, following the cookie crumb trail, she thrust her body into the cage to nibble the cookie waiting there. Thump! Squeak!



“We caught the Think-Fest Thief!”
Thelma and Theo shouted. They turned on the lights and hurried to the cage where they found . . . a glittery-gold mouse! “I thought so,” Mrs. Thorwald said with a grin. “Don’t feel threatened, little thief, we just want you to shop somewhere else!”

Thelma was curious. She followed the gold glitter footprints to a shabby box in a corner of the classroom. “Theo! Mrs. Thorwald! Look at this!” Thelma shouted. “This is why the mouse turned into a thief!”

There, nestled warmly in the shredded brown paper, thread, thimbles, and macaroni, slept three baby mice as big as your thumb.



Theo, Thelma, and Mrs. Thorwald carried the caged mouse and her sleeping babies outside. At the far end of the playground, they settled the little nest deep inside a thorny thicket. Then, as they set the caged mouse free to join her family, Theo, Thelma, and Mrs. Thorwald said, “Goodbye, little mouse! This is your new home!”